



ENCOURAGEMENT BAGS – Churches from Rankin Association have partnered with Mississippi Baptist Medical Center, Jackson, to provide encouragement bags for cancer patients. Shown, from left, are Allen Stephens, Associational Missions Director; Diane Thompson, Executive Assistant; and Tonya Ball, cancer center navigator. (Photo by Tony Martin)

What an encouragement!

Rankin Assoc. delivers goodie bags to cancer patients at Baptist

Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Rankin Association has partnered with Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson to provide "encouragement bags" for patients and their families dealing with cancer. The project was an idea that was inspired by

the G.A.'s and R. A.'s at Bethel Church, Brandon.

Tonya Ball is the cancer center navigator at the cancer center. Ball's responsibilities include assisting patients with any of their needs, including Medicare, Medicaid, disability, social work, and help with lodging or transportation.

Rankin Association deliv-

ers 300 encouragement bags a month to the hospital. "Mrs. Diane [Thompson] from the Association has been a great help," Ball said. "She contacted Gordon Sansing, and I got a call from someone he'd talked to. Initially, Diane's husband was here for chemotherapy."

"He got one of the bags that the G.A.'s at Bethel did," Thompson said. "I was with him when he got the bag, and I thought that was the neatest thing ever."

see BAGS on p. 5

178TH MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION



IN SESSION – Mississippi Baptist Convention President David Hamilton, senior pastor of West Heights Church, Pontotoc, gavels to order the 178th annual session of the convention on the morning of Oct. 29 at First Church, Jackson. One of the highlights of the meeting will be the election of a new president, as Hamilton completes his second one-year term in office. For complete coverage of the annual meeting, see next week's issue of The Baptist Record. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Moore: U.S. religious liberty under assault

WASHINGTON (BP) – Americans acting on their religious convictions are being singled out "because they won't sing out of the hymn book of the church of the sexual revolution," in the view of Southern Baptist ethics leader Russell D. Moore.

Moore, president of Southern Baptists' Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, voiced his assessment of religious freedom's status in the United States during an Oct. 20 interview on the Fox network's Fox & Friends program.

He appeared on the show to comment on a federal lawsuit filed by GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) to challenge the Obama administration's abortion/contraception mandate. That regulation requires employers to pay for coverage of workers' contraceptives, including drugs that can cause abortions, but does not provide an exemption for entities like those that filed the suit.

GuideStone, the SBC's health and financial benefits entity, in its suit filed Oct. 11 with two of its health plan participants, contended its religious liberty and that of non-church-related organizations covered in its plan are violated by a rule issued by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to implement the 2010 health care law.

The HHS mandate "is just one fiery raft in a burning house," Moore said. "Religious liberty is under assault all over the place in this country in ways that I think are probably more pronounced than we have seen since the founding era."

Individuals and institutions are even shutting down charitable work because of their refusal to compromise their religious beliefs, Moore said in agreeing with host Tucker Carlson's appraisal.

"People who are doing good things in their communities motivated by religious convictions are simply being driven out of the public square because they won't sing out of the hymn book of the church of the sexual revolution," Moore said.

"I just don't think we can live this way as Americans."

The HHS mandate violates the consciences of those who oppose abortion-causing drugs or contraceptives, Moore told Carlson during the interview. "We simply can't participate in these things."

GuideStone's first-ever lawsuit against the federal government was the 74th filed against the mandate, according to the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which is representing GuideStone and the other plaintiffs – Truett-McConnell College, a Baptist-affiliated school in Cleveland, Ga., and Oklahoma City-based

Reaching Souls International. The lawsuit, filed in a federal court in Oklahoma City, seeks a preliminary injunction blocking enforcement of the mandate until the judicial process is complete.

GuideStone and its fellow plaintiffs face heavy financial penalties for non-compliance. The mandate will take effect Jan. 1, 2014, for Dallas-based GuideStone, which serves not only churches but missions organizations, schools, hospitals, state Baptist conventions, and other Baptist and evangelical ministries.

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Keeping the holy in 'holy'

From inside the cavernous big-city facilities in the pathway of major urban expansions to the smaller, more rural churches heavily laden with our rich Mississippi Baptist history, we are amply reminded of who we are, whose we are, and from whence we came.

It's been quite a while now since Richard Curtis, the state's first Baptist preacher, debarked his Mississippi River raft in the early 1800s and started organizing churches in the southwest portion of what was soon to become the State of Mississippi. We no longer have to flee bellicose Native Americans or angry Catholics from Louisiana, as did Curtis, but the battle for the souls of Mississippians is just as critical today as it was back then.

In a state with nearly 2,200 Mississippi Baptist churches alone, many people have simply opted out of attending church. Others take their church attendance far too casually. Whether they realize it, many of these people have allowed their relationship to falter with Almighty God and his Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Learned people have made the argument, not entirely invalid, that one needn't go to church to be an observant Christian. That may be so, but the difficulty of practicing a true faith without being a part of a body of believers is surely more than most people can overcome in this increasing materialistic and pagan world.

A church is an aptly-named sanctuary from the pressures of the world, and a refuge for the spiritually down-trodden. The mere hour that it takes to attend a modern worship service can do more to restore a person's zest for life than many hours of psychotherapy. In addition, the Sunday Schools and Discipleship classes that surround a worship service gird us for the never-ending fight against the evil one.

Little ones begin the process of Scripture memorization that will serve them through a lifetime. Royal Ambassadors and Girls in Action learn of missions around the world and begin the process of finding their own place in Kingdom work. Church is a lighthouse beacon for the lost. Church is the solid anchor in the storms of life. Church is the refilling station for the spiritually exhausted. Church is all those good things, and much more.

Church is, above all, holy ground, but in our enlightened post-Christian culture, virtually nothing is considered holy. To the world's ears, holy is nothing more than a meaningless word to be placed for dramatic effect in front of a variety of vulgarities and suggestive phrases. Certainly, the sociopaths who dominate the American entertainment industry seldom think of using the word in any other context.

Christians should not be deceived. Holiness is and always will be important to God. Even the simplest reference materials list more than 654 biblical instances of the use of the words holy and holiness. The latter part of Hebrews 12:14 states, "...without holiness no one will see the Lord."

When we enter church, we are standing on holy ground. However the world chooses (or not) to define holy, the word should have special meaning to us when we tread the precious soil on which our houses of worship are built. There are many legitimate uses for this holy ground, and each purpose should be bathed in prayer, sanctified as holy, and given over to the glory of the Father.

Disregarding the ways of the world, let us live by the words of Hebrews 12:14, else the true meaning of holy be tragically explained to us on our day of reckoning.

Pastors' wives are people, too

Ever wondered how you know when someone needs encouragement? Here's a simple test. It works every time: Check and see if they have a pulse.

Pastor, one of the members in your congregation whose heart beats regularly for you is your wife. She's your No. 1 fan and your No. 2 responsibility after your relationship with Jesus. She needs encouragement. Here are five practical ways you can do that:



Guest opinion
with Ken Whitten

■ **Pray with your wife.** One of the most important and encouraging activities you can do with your wife is join with her in prayer. When she hears your struggles and sees your vulnerabilities, she knows you trust her with your heart.

She also knows the man behind the pulpit not only needs God's power and grace, but he also needs his partner in ministry.

■ **Publicly praise her ministry.** Many times a pastor believes that to praise his wife publicly shows favoritism and a sense of entitlement, but it truly demonstrates a spirit of gratefulness for her calling and recognition for the sacrifices she makes every day for your ministry.

Keep in mind, her greatest ministry may be in the home and not in the church, which is even more reason for fulfilling Proverbs 31:28: "Her sons rise up and call her blessed. Her husband also praises her."

■ **Put her second in your life.** After your relationship with Jesus Christ, your bride is your highest priority. One of the ways you encourage her and show her she has value is to dialogue daily, date weekly, and depart quarterly.

In your conversations, make sure you're talking with her about her spiritual walk, the kids, her dreams. If you do talk about the church and ministry, make sure she brings up the subject first. She cares as much about the church as you do but she just wants to

know she is more important to you than the church.

Pastor, Jesus has a Bride, and you do, too. So go home to yours. He'll take care of His.

■ **Permit her to be a member, too.** Some of your best ideas for sermons and ministry are from members. Why not get ideas from your favorite member — your wife? She loves you the most and knows you the best.

Being a member also means that sometimes the family takes priority over the church. While you may have to be at church, allowing your wife the freedom to watch your son or daughter participate in a sporting or school event on a Wednesday evening not only encourages her, but your family as well.

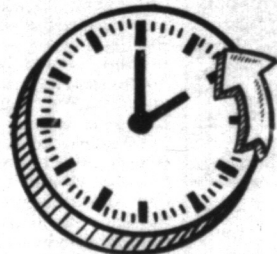
■ **Persuade her to get involved in the Flourish.me community.**

Flourish is a place to connect with other ministry wives. Hearing stories and receiving inspiration from other ministry wives will encourage her. Flourish provides great reading resources, devotionals, and inspirational messages just for women, written by women who have been and are pastors' wives. They understand what it means to be married to a pastor and married to a ministry at the same time.

Whitten is senior pastor of the Tampa-area Idlewild Church in Lutz. This article originally appeared in the Fall 2013 edition of *On Mission*, published by the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Alpharetta, Ga.

DON'T FORGET!

Daylight Saving Time
ends at 2:00 a.m.
on Sunday, November 3.
Turn back your clock one hour
before going to sleep
Saturday night.



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'God particle' discovery folds into intelligent design debate

NASHVILLE (BP) — Discovery of the so-called "God particle" not only helped two physicists win this year's Nobel Prize, it unintentionally bolstered the arguments of the Intelligent Design movement, according to Southern Baptist scientists.

The particle, whose scientific name is the Higgs boson, derives its popular name from the title of the 1993 book, *God Particle*, by atheist physicist Leon Lederman. However, "a closer consideration of the function and properties of the Higgs boson is very enlightening from a theistic perspective," Bruce Gordon, associate professor of the history and philosophy of science at Houston Baptist University in Houston, Texas, told Baptist Press in an e-mail interview.

"In direct opposition to Nobel Laureate Steven Weinberg's remark that 'the more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it seems pointless,' we can only recommend the more obvious and rational view that the greater our comprehension of the universe, the more we should be given to doxology: The heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims His handiwork (Psalm 19:1)," said Gordon, who also is a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute, a Seattle-based think tank that plays a leading role in the Intelligent Design movement.

Intelligent Design supporters argue that the universe is the orderly product of intelligence rather than blind chance.

A boson is one of the two

classes of known particles. Bosons are distinguished from fermions based on the type of spin they have. Generally, fermions make up matter while bosons transmit forces that hold matter together.

Most physicists dislike the term, "God particle," and do not use it even in popular scientific literature. They say the term was a marketing ploy for Lederman's book rather than a helpful scientific descriptor of the Higgs boson.

Theoretical physicists Peter Higgs, 84, and Francois Englert, 80, were announced Oct. 8 as this year's Nobel Prize winners in physics for proposing the existence of the Higgs boson nearly 50 years ago. When the particle was finally discovered last year at the world's most powerful particle accelerator in Switzerland, it vindicated their theory.

The two scientists will split a prize of \$1.2 million to be awarded in Stockholm on Dec. 10.

Higgs, of the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, and Englert, of the Université Libre de Bruxelles in Belgium, were among a handful of physicists in the early 1960s seeking to explain the origin of mass by positing a force field that fills all space and produces resistance to objects moving through it.

The field, they said, acts like a cosmic molasses, sticking to particles as they move and giving them mass. The Higgs boson is the interacting mechanism of the Higgs field. The more interactions a moving particle has

with Higgs bosons, the more massive it is.

The Higgs boson was the last missing ingredient in a set of equations known as the Standard Model of Particle Physics that explains how particles interact. It took half a century to discover the Higgs boson because it exists as matter for less than a billionth of a billionth of a second and disappears in ways that make it look like other types of particles.

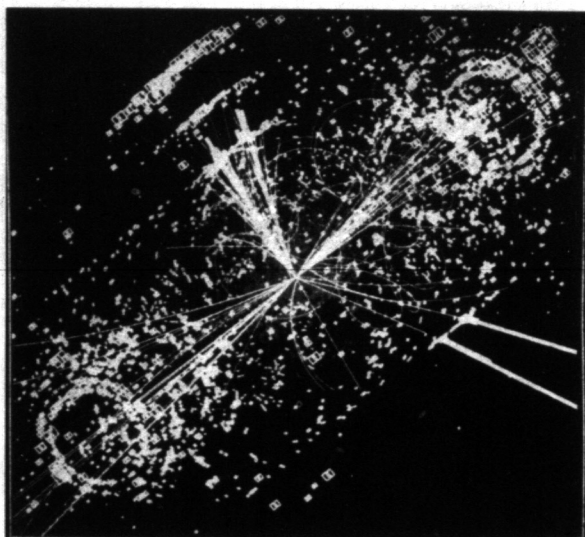
If the Higgs field did not exist, particles would be massless and move at the speed of light. Atoms would not exist either, and the universe would be lifeless.

"Along with a handful of other fundamental forces and laws" like gravity and electromagnetism, "the Higgs mechanism is necessary for the existence of life," Gordon said. "Without it, we wouldn't be here."

The Higgs boson is significant for the Intelligent Design movement because its mass and interaction strength are fine-tuned to accommodate the existence of life, which points to the particle's being the product of a rational creator rather than an undirected natural process.

If the subatomic Higgs boson had even five times its measured mass, it would render life impossible, Gordon said.

"The amount of fine-tuning present in the forms taken by the laws of nature, the conditions governing the beginning of the universe, and the values associated with various universal constants (force-field strengths, particle masses, etc.) is beyond the



HIGGS PROOF? — This simulated image of a Higgs boson particle, popularly called the "God particle," is based on data from the Large Hadron Collider of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Switzerland. Scientists say the Higgs boson eluded them for so long because it exists only for less than a billionth of a billionth of a second. (BP photo courtesy of CERN)

reach of any undirected process," Gordon said.

"The specified nature of these forms, conditions, and values, combined with their staggering and (mostly) multiplicative improbabilities, leads inexorably to the conclusion that the universe has these properties as the result of an intelligent cause, not an undirected process."

William Nettles, professor of physics at Baptist-affiliated Union University in Jackson, Tn., agreed that discovery of the Higgs boson suggests the universe is orderly and designed, but he urged Christians not to blow the new scientific insight out of proportion.

The discovery "does not detract from the faith-held fact that God created the universe, and all things hold together in the Son," Nettles told BP. "We just have a better picture of God's details... Our mission is still to bring glory to God through telling His Gospel to all. Just as gunpowder, the electric light bulb, or the automobile didn't change the Gospel message of forgiveness of sin, neither does the Higgs boson."

Believers should take comfort in the fact that God allows humans to understand how the physical world is structured, Nettles said. If not for scientists who understood quantum mechanics — the field of study in which the Higgs boson was discovered — "there would be no lasers, no transistors, no cell phones, no personal computers, and no large jet airplanes," he said.

"We never know when knowledge or even the process of increasing knowledge can grow into something practical," Nettles said. Christians "can appreciate the insight and effort of the human mind in searching for and developing a model for our

physical structures, because we know that God has enabled us to do that."

Don Walton, pastor of New Hope Church in Zephyrhills, Fla., said in an Internet commentary that the popular name, "God particle," is misleading. Though the Higgs boson helps explain how particles massed together to form the universe, it does not replace God as the ultimate explanation for all that exists, he said.

Despite its "fantastic" discovery of "an elementary particle that serves as a cosmic molasses, modern-day science is completely void of answers to the following questions," Walton wrote:

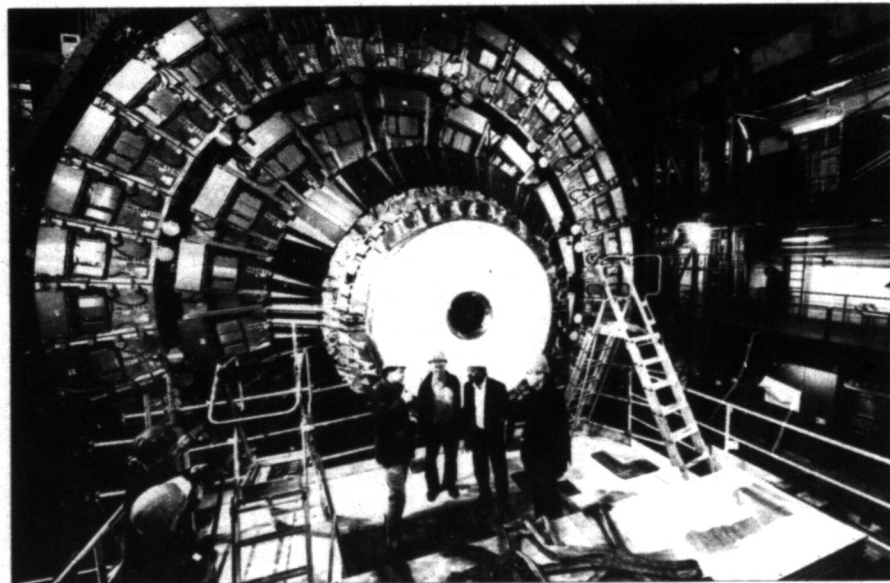
- What power caused the Big Bang at the universe's inception?
- How did flying particles blown through space at the speed of light mass together to form orderly matter with its intricately designed details?

- How do lifeless particles mass together to form living organisms?

- If the universe is totally dependent upon and completely explainable by the laws of nature, then, where did the laws of nature come from?

Walton continued, "Far from disproving the existence of God, the discoveries of modern-day science, as the above questions clearly show, inevitably lead us back to the Creator as the only viable explanation for creation."

Discovery of the Higgs boson, Gordon noted, should spur scientists to pursue additional insights that demonstrate the universe's intricate design. "Where the fine-tuning of the universe for the existence of life is concerned, these observations about the Higgs boson are just the tip of the iceberg."



GETTING READY — Scientists inspect the inner workings of the Large Hadron Collider, known as CERN, in Europe last year in preparation for the tests they believe provided evidence of the existence of the "God Particle," or Higgs boson, that they posit will confirm a number of theories about the origin and composition of the universe. (Photo courtesy of CERN)

This weekend the nation will be thinking about time again. Twice a year it seems to rise to the pinnacle of national concern and importance as the government dictates that an hour is snatched away from us and then about a half a year later it is given back to us. Personally, like many of you, I wish that they would leave it alone. You and I both know that it is not a matter of taking or giving an hour. It is simply a matter of manipulating our clocks so that we are forced to move to a new rhythm of life. Of course, on a personal basis if we want to, we can adjust our clocks and shift them around so that we get up every morning at 10 o'clock when in reality it may be four o'clock. It is confusing, and some folks stay confused until the time changes again.

When we stop and think about time, we are reminded of the fact that it is one of the few things in life where every person is on the same page and shares in the same event. Day by day we are handed 24 fresh hours to live. Regardless of your name, race, religion or I.Q., you get the same 24 hours as everybody else. The President of the United States and the homeless street person receive the identical same amount of time each day. The highly paid and gifted professional athlete and the person struggling with a disability receive the same amount of time.

In addition to all of us getting the same amount of time each day, there is the difficulty that virtually everyone runs into more than they think they do, and that is being controlled by the time. Your family, job, personal needs, social activities, friends, sports, hobbies, health, television, Facebook, Twitter, computer searches, driving, studying, reading, shopping and a thousand other things are whittling away at the time you have. Now while the time change this weekend is not all that big of a deal and you will adjust to it fairly quickly and move on, what you are doing with your time day after day or in some cases what you feel like your time is doing to you is worth pausing to think about,



The Time of Your Life

evaluate and maybe adjust your life to fit your time.

Just recently, I was walking in our neighborhood in the pre-dawn light. The sun had not yet winked over the horizon, but its presence was being felt. I passed by the sidewalk in front of a home where apparently some children had been busy doing some art work. I glanced over at it to see what was there. Apparently, a girl had written her name about six feet long in several colors on the sidewalk. It was catchy and on either side of the name, there were other drawings, some stick figures and some flowers. Then I noticed written underneath the name it said, "If you have time, stop and draw something." My first thought was that I could not draw. My second thought was I do not have time, and so I just kept on walking.

It was a cul-de-sac street and so in several hundred yards I ran out of road, and I was going to have to come back by that way. All of the time, I was being haunted by the thought, "If you have time, stop and draw something." Of the many things that I cannot do, near the top of my inabilities would have to be drawing. My stick people look more like Chinese writing than they do people, but I thought well at least I could do what I could do and what I could do was write a note to the folks who put

the message there. So when I reached that spot, I stopped and found a big piece of chalk. I wrote on the sidewalk, "Thank you for brightening my day." I went on my way with the image of the artwork in my mind and concern about what I was doing with my time.

As I was continuing to reflect on the "if you have time" statement, I realized that I thought I did not have time to leave a response or draw anything, but I did have time to do my morning walk and exercise. I did have time to do what I felt like I needed to be doing. I did not have time to stop and draw anything because I felt incapable and did not want to waste any of my time. The bottom line was I did have time to do what I could do, if I wanted to do it. For you see, most of the time that is the way it is with our time. We can do what we feel like we need or want to do with our time. And so I took the time to stop and at least leave a note for the passersby over the next few days or until the rain washed it all away.

As I walked on I was thankful that I could enjoy a new day and could get out and exercise. I know many people who would give anything if they could use their time that way. Then I also felt good because I had used a small portion of my time to say thank you to some-

body who I did not even know who had brightened my day with their drawings and thoughtfulness to invite me to be a part of it. In a world of so many, many things that I cannot do, the least that I can do and it seems important for all of us to do is to thank the people who can do the things which we cannot do. Probably, even more tragic in our lives than wasting our time or misusing our moments is to live stuck in the mire of ingratitude for the folks around us who bless us. Expressing gratitude and sincere thanks is a magnificent way for us to use some of our time each day.

Now with all of this time talk, I must say that the ultimate and most important use of time can be found in a revelation from the Word of God. Paul penned these words saying, "Now is the accepted time" (2 Cor. 6:2). He is talking about the opportune time, the appropriate, responsive time in our lives to come to know Jesus. In the same verse, he goes on to say, "Today is the day of salvation." Today you may have business on your mind, health issues weighing you down, or your time is being consumed by some heartbreak that has taken place in your life. None of those things or a thousand things like them that may crowd in on your time schedule is as important as what you have done with Jesus. This very moment is the accepted time when you can accept Christ as your Lord and when He is ready to accept you as His child.

The Scripture says in Rom. 10:9, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." How much time does it take to do that? How many seconds does it take just to read those words? How much time have you spent in life or misspent in life and failed to do the most important thing in all of time and eternity - commit your life to Jesus? Take the time to do that right now!

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

Mississippi Baptist churches celebrate anniversaries in 2014

CLINTON, Ms. (Special) — The Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission (MBHC) has announced that the total of 38 churches, representing 5,200 years of Kingdom work, will reach significant milestones in 2014 and are urged to celebrate those anniversaries, according to MBHC Executive Secretary Anthony Kay of Clinton.

Each church that informs MBHC of their significant anniversary celebration will receive a framed certificate and letter of commendation. A significant anniversary is defined by the commission as 200 years, 175 years, 150 years, 125 years, and 100 years.

The commission requests that any church celebrating a significant anniversary that is not included in the list below should contact MBHC at P.O. Box 4024, Clinton, MS 39058. Telephone: (601) 925-3434. E-mail: mbhc@mc.edu.

200 Years (3)

Antioch (Marion)
Old Silver Creek (Lawrence)
Silver Creek (Pike)

150 Years (3)

Clear Creek (Wayne)
Goodwater (Lauderdale)
Pleasant Dale (Union County)

Pheba (Golden Triangle)
Pilgrims Rest (Webster)
Sharon (Smith)
Unity (Union)

175 Years (8)

Beihel (Newton)
Bond (Neshoba)
Clear Creek (Smith)
FBC Meridian (Lauderdale)
FBC Starkville (Golden Triangle)
FBC Vicksburg (Warren)
Fine Creek (Scott)
Sulphur Springs (Newton)

125 Years (14)

Arbor Grove (Chickasaw)
Bethlehem (Yazoo)
Calvary (Lawrence)
FBC Madison (Metro)
FBC Rolling Fork (Sharkey/Issaquena)
Hebron (Mississippi)
Lula (North Delta)
Myrick (Jones)
New Home (Itawamba)

100 Years (10)

Artesia (Golden Triangle)
Becker (Monroe)
Calvary (Winston)
Clear Springs (Smith)
East Salem (Greene)
New Elbethel (Lafayette)
Pine Level (George/Green)
Poplar Flat (Winston)
Richburg (Lamar)
Saul's Valley (Lawrence)

BIBL10C1PHER

CTL XO KOTB XAN KCM, CTL IPZZHTOL

KABX BXO IXAOR ESAONBN CTL ICE-

BCATN, XPK XO ZAUXB FOBSCM XAZ

HTBP BXOZ.

JHGO BKOTBM-BKP: RPHS

Clue: R = F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark 14:35

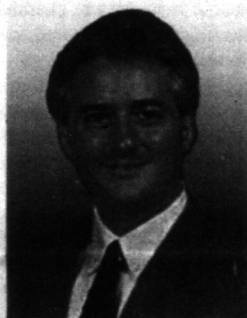
By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005



THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST FOUNDATION

Foundation News • Fall 2013

Old-fashioned ministry: Investing in others



Daniel Hall
Director • MBF

Prelude

Having recently reached the milestone of 50 years of age (I'm actually 51 but decided to stop counting at 50), I suppose that I officially have reached middle age, right? No, I'm not really anticipating living until 100, but I'm told that 50 is the new 30 (or something similar). Some people I know think that I am a product of the Middle Ages rather than middle-aged. I was out of town on my 50th birthday, so my wife sent me a text message that indicated that my AARP registration information had arrived in the mail. I reminded her that I had received an AARP packet when I

turned 40 just a short time ago. (I probably need a new promo picture since the one displayed in this article was taken closer to my 40th birthday than my 50th.)

I suppose that many benefits come from getting older. One specific benefit may be that being referred to as "old fashioned" or "old school" can be received as a compliment regardless of how the comment was intended. Besides, having "old fashioned" or "old school" values can be a badge of honor. Why? Because an "old fashioned" approach to life typically is accompanied by wisdom that comes slowly through the years rather than developing instantly at the speed of a

microwave oven or a drive-through window.

Vocational ministry is an area where I believe that being somewhat "old-fashioned" is to be preferred.

While the leadership paradigm seems to have shifted away from an "old school" model in many churches and other ministry areas, I would maintain that the example of a servant should be the preferred and expected practice still today. This edition of *Foundation News* is presented with the goal of highlighting three servant leaders whose legacy of old-fashioned ministry through music continues to influence current and future generations of ministers.

W.C. Morgan — Mississippi's Music Man

William Claude (W.C.) Morgan was born on August 29, 1902 as the seventh of eight children to a lumberman in Perry County, Mississippi. W.C.'s mother encouraged all of her children to pursue all learning opportunities. Her special emphasis, however, was on learning experiences related to music. Using an old pump organ, W.C.'s older sister Maude provided her brother with his early keyboard training. His formal piano study began during his freshman year of high school.

W.C.'s interests during high school included math, science, sports, music, and the Baptist Young People's Union (B.Y.P.U.). His interest in church ministry was fostered as a teenager.

As a student at Mississippi College, W.C. met his future wife Kate Polk, whose father was a Louisiana pastor. While leading the music for a revival at

the church where Kate's father served as pastor, W.C. asked Kate to marry him. She agreed, and the couple wed in July 1926. The next year, both W.C. and Kate taught school in Carthage. W.C. served as the football coach, math and science teacher, and band director at Carthage High School. Together, this young couple helped strengthen their church in Carthage by emphasizing ministry to young people.

Pursuing his life-long dream of studying music in seminary, both W.C. and Kate enrolled as students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. They followed a three-day journey on gravel roads in the rain, driving a stripped-down Model T, without a top, from Mississippi to Fort Worth, Texas. While at seminary, W.C. studied religious education and music as he majored in pipe organ and voice.

With the Great Depression in full swing at the time of his graduation from SWBTS in 1931, few churches had the financial capacity to enlist any ministerial staff beyond the pastor. Therefore, W.C. accepted various public school teaching positions throughout Mississippi. The scope of his subject knowledge, his interest in young people, and his desire to share his love for music with others were apparent as W.C. taught math, science, band, and directed the orchestra. In addition, he taught individual piano and other instrument lessons.

The Morgans continued to minister through Mississippi public schools and churches for the next several years. Whether serving as the band director at Copiah-Lincoln Jr. College or Bay St. Louis High School, W.C. continued to pursue excellence in music.

Based on his proficiency in playing twenty-seven different instruments, W.C. was awarded a bachelor's degree in music from the prestigious Vandercook School of Music in Chicago. Thereafter, he was granted a lifetime certificate to teach band, orchestra, and choir in public schools.

When the school in Bay St. Louis was unable to pay his meager salary, W.C. took a job in a shipyard in Mobile, Ala. Although the wages were better, the living conditions were not suitable for a young family that now included W.C. and Kate's daughter, Joy. Besides having to live in a tent, Joy's school was overcrowded. Believing that God had called him into church music ministry, W.C. moved his family from Mobile and the more secure financial situation

content continues on following page

content continued from previous page

to serve as the Minister of Education and Music at a church in Crystal Springs in 1942. Soon thereafter, the First Baptist Church of Vicksburg called W.C. to their ministerial staff where he served for five years.

In 1948, W.C. accepted the invitation to become an associate in the Training Union Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Following the sudden death of Luther Harrison (first Director of the MBCB Music Department) in 1948, W.C. had double duty as he began promoting music programming across the state with the Music Department while also continuing his responsibilities in the Training Union Department.

In January 1951, W.C. Morgan began his service as the Director of the Church Music Department. He would serve in this capacity for the next thirteen and one-half years. All of W.C.'s past experiences in band and orchestra, education, athletics, coaching, and his service in public schools and churches around the

"My people are in the churches of Mississippi. My heart is there."

— W.C. Morgan

state afforded him a unique perspective on ministry. His winsome personality, strong work ethic, and his unending desire to honor his Lord in every aspect of his life, served W.C. well for this special ministry assignment.

During his tenure with the Music Department, W.C. emphasized music festivals and music as-

semblies. He helped launch the Mississippi Baptist Keyboard Festival which had 48 participants in 1949. Because of W.C.'s vision back in the 1940s, several hundred young pianists currently participate in this annual ministry event at multiple locations across the state. Furthermore, he worked extensively with leadership from every Baptist association across the state to develop opportunities to train and encourage church musicians.

When Mississippi Baptists acquired the property that would become known as the Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, W.C. took full advantage of the opportunity to hold music festivals and conferences for all ages. W.C.'s dream of having large music gatherings in Mississippi came to fruition through Gulfshore Baptist Assembly and other locations across the state. The number of festival participants increased each year. According to most observers, Mississippi's music assembly program was the largest in the entire Southern Baptist Convention under Morgan's leadership.

Referring to her father as "Mississippi's Music Man," Joy Morgan Davis said, "Those who knew him will remember that he devoted his life to the ministry of Sacred Music in Mississippi. He was fervent about it. Several times he was approached about joining the SBC Music Department in Nashville, Tenn. B.B. McKinney, who headed that department for so many years, had taught my father at Southwestern, and was



W.C. Morgan

his mentor and then his close friend. But my father always declined the invitation without hesitation. 'My people are in the churches of Mississippi,' he would say. 'My heart is there.'"

From all accounts, Claude Morgan ministered tirelessly at a pace that few could match. While at Gulfshore Baptist Assembly in April 1961, W.C. suffered the first of his three heart attacks. Following both the first and the second (1963 at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly in Ashville, N.C.), W.C. kept pressing on in his ministry through the Church Music Department. He experienced a final heart attack on March 12, 1964.

On March 13, 1964, William Claude Morgan completed his earthly sojourn and entered into his heavenly home. On the occasion of his funeral, Hines Sims (then Director of the Music Department at the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn.) declared, "When we in Nashville got to the place [where] we needed something new to give us a boost, we always looked to see what Claude Morgan was doing in Mississippi. He was a highly respected and progressive leader in Mississippi and the Southern Baptist Convention in the development of music in our churches — music that is God-honoring, Christ-centered, and meaningful in Christian worship."

Throughout his life, William Claude Morgan served his Lord faithfully and completely. As an expression of appreciation for this highly regarded musician and minister, the Mississippi Church Music Conference established the "W.C. Morgan Memorial Scholarship" through the Mississippi Baptist Foundation as a memorial to his life and legacy. The scholarship provides merit-based awards to students majoring in music at a Mississippi Baptist college with intent to serve in church music ministry.

Dan C. Hall — A 'cornbread and peas' approach

Daniel Carter Hall was born February 13, 1928 in the Big Level community located in Stone County, Mississippi near Wiggins. Dan's mother Gertrude was a school teacher and a musician and the family enjoyed singing around the piano. Dan's father, Randall, led the singing at Big Level Baptist Church while Gertrude was the church pianist.

The example of involvement in music leadership and training set by his parents had a profound influence on

Dan throughout his life. Dan's mom taught him piano for two years. When Mrs. Clyde Campbell became Dan's piano teacher, she received Gertrude's home-canned food in exchange for the piano lessons she provided.

Music was very important to Dan's mother. In fact, believing that music should be a part of the public school curriculum, Gertrude had a little chat with the state superintendent of education when he visited the Hall's home in Big Level during the 1930s. Soon thereafter music became part of the curriculum in the public schools in Mississippi.

Dan began playing the piano for Sunday School at Big Level Baptist Church and for worship services at age fourteen. When he was seventeen, Dan began substituting for his father as the church's song leader.

Challenges and heartache confronted Dan early in his life. At age thirteen he developed osteomyelitis in his leg. This disease of the bone marrow necessitated the use of crutches for four years. Doctors feared that Dan might lose his leg. By his own testimony years later, Dan indicated that he became so adept at using those crutches that he could



balance on and roll a log floating in the creek. (Unfortunately, I am not aware of any witnesses who can attest to that claim.) When Dan was fifteen, his older brother Dave died at the age of seventeen in a school bus accident while driving home following play practice at school. At age eighteen, further anguish invaded Dan's young life when his mother died.

Dan entered Perkinston Junior College with designs on becoming an engineer. Following his first year, he determined that he should study music and teach in the public school.

The first two years of Dan's teaching career were spent leading the elementary and high school music program at the Home Vocational School in the Big Level community where Dan had graduated. Some fifty years later, one of his former students stated, "Dan was the only person who could have gotten all of us boys to come sing in a choir." Dan's influence on people and the high regard others had for him are part of the continued legacy of his life and ministry.

While teaching at Home Vocational School, Dan also led music at Big Level Baptist Church and First Baptist Church in Wiggins. During this time, Dan not only felt that God was calling him to pursue vocational ministry, but he also believed that he needed to finish college. So, with \$14 in his pocket, borrowing his father's car, Dan struck out for Mississippi College in Clinton. At one point during his educational experience, Dan became so frustrated that he went back to his dormitory room intent on returning to Stone County to work with his dad on the family farm. As he reached for his suitcase on the shelf of his closet, something stopped him. In relating that experience he indicated that he knew he had to stay in school and complete his music training because,

"the call of God was so strong in my life that I would have served him for free."

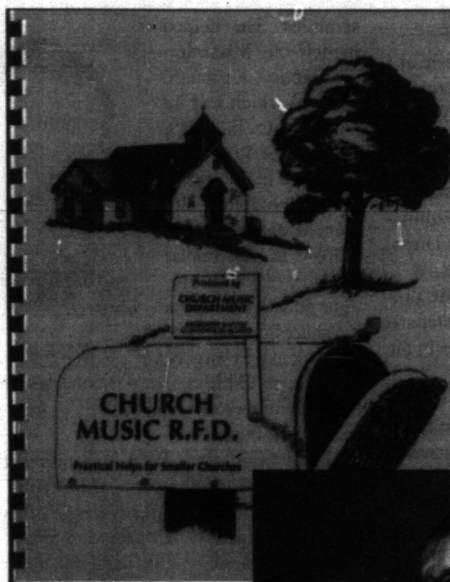
In 1952, Dan graduated from Mississippi College with a degree in church music. He served as minister of music at Griffith Memorial Baptist Church during his senior year. Following graduation, Dan served as minister of music at Temple Baptist Church in Hattiesburg and Winbourne Avenue Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, La. Then, while pursuing a Master of Sacred Music degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Dan served as the music minister at Amite Baptist Church in Denham Springs, La.

After graduating from NOBTS in 1956, Dan accepted a position in the Church Music Department at the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn. He served at the BSSB for eight years, during which time Dan met and married Mera

Cannon, who was an associate editor in the Church Training Department at the Sunday School Board. She served alongside Dan in many ways, but perhaps her most notable

accomplishment was raising five children — all of whom are currently involved in some aspect of ministry and leadership on a vocational or lay basis.

Following the death of W.C. Morgan, Dan returned to his home state in 1964 to become the Director of the Church Music De-



The Church Music R.F.D.

partment of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. He served Mississippi Baptists for twenty-three and one half years.

Throughout those years, Dan ministered to, encouraged, and influenced untold numbers of church musicians as he traversed the state from north to south and east to west (often in the same day) to welcome a new music minister to a church or to attend a music festival or other events to encourage and minister to others.

Although Dan joyfully ministered to churches of every size and in every locale, he was a particular champion for small churches as he encouraged part-time, bi-vocational, and volunteer church musicians to offer their best to the Lord. Along with

Jimmy McCaleb and a host of other contributors across the state, Dan helped develop a resource for smaller churches. Describing this resource as a "cornbread and peas" approach to church music, *Church Music RFD* provides a practical approach to the ministry of music. Having received several updates through the years, this publication continues to have an influence on church music in Mississippi and on mission fields throughout the world.

Another significant contribution to ministry through music that was born under Dan's leadership came in 1965 with the formation of the Mississippi Singing Churchmen. Nearly 50 years later, the ministry and mission involvement of this outstanding group of music ministers from across our state continues as a source of inspiration, encouragement, and blessing throughout Mississippi and around the globe.

Hanging on Dan's wall in his Baptist Building office was a cross-stitched gift from his daughter-in-law which declared, "Working for the Lord doesn't pay much, but the retirement

plan is out of this world." On October 17, 1987, Dan began receiving the blessings of God's eternal retirement plan. Shortly thereafter, Mera Hall established the "Dan C. Hall Memorial Scholarship" through the Mississippi Baptist Foundation, to provide financial assistance to students pursuing music ministry at Dan's alma maters, Mississippi College and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Through this memorial, future servant leaders can be trained to minister faithfully, tirelessly, and hopefully with the same humility that was on display through Dan.

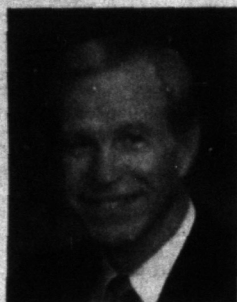


Dan and Mera Hall

Minister Musician Memorial

J.M. Wood — Training members to be worship leaders

For nearly three decades J.M. Wood served the Lord in Mississippi. During the majority of those years,



J.M. Wood

the congregation of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Jackson experienced the wonderful privilege and

Broadmoor's music ministry continued to grow under J.M.'s leadership. Scarcely six months after his arrival at Broadmoor, over twenty choral groups and ensembles were ministering both within the church and throughout the community under J.M.'s direction. One of J.M.'s goals for the music

ministry was that anyone and everyone could have the opportunity to participate. Thus, J.M. not only encouraged church members to utilize their talents in service to the Lord, but he also provided training experiences for all ages. J.M.'s commitment to ministry and missions eventually resulted in choir tours becoming an ongoing component of the church's mission outreach. Despite all of J.M.'s involvement with the various choral

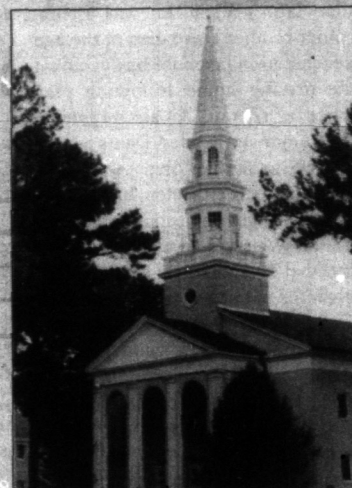
background for any of what I am doing." Nonetheless, J.M. held fast to the promises of Proverbs 3:5-6 as his favorite and the guiding scripture for his life. The Lord honored J.M.'s perseverance and his availability for ministry by directing his path and equipping him for each ministry assignment.

groups, Sunday worship planning, preparation, and presentation was of utmost importance to him. The priority and passion with which he approached Sunday worship and the unique role of the music ministry within this context can be summarized in J.M.'s own words, "On Sunday morning, I want the church choir to be worship leaders. I want them to understand if worship takes place, it has to begin with the music ministry through the choir."

J.M. was a humble man who desired to lift up the name of the Lord rather than focus on himself. A wise man (my dad) described J.M. as "a genuine guy," speaking to J.M.'s character and integrity.

Following J.M.'s retirement from Broadmoor at the end of 1994, he served for another five years as the Minister of Music at First Baptist Church of Brandon before retiring again in 1999. First Baptist Church honored J.M.'s life and ministry with a memorial scholarship through the Mississippi Baptist Foundation. The proceeds from this memorial provide financial assistance to church music majors attending one of the three Baptist colleges in Mississippi or one of the Southern Baptist seminaries.

In November of 2001, J.M. retired to his heavenly mansion when the Lord called him into "higher service." The memorial serves as a perpetual reminder of a genuine minister, a sincere musician, and a true



Broadmoor Baptist Church, at West Northside Drive in Jackson

friend who, as the Lord's servant, offered himself completely to God and through whom the Lord blessed multitudes. In a letter to one of the early recipients of the "J.M. Wood Memorial Fund," Gail Wood wrote, "The depth of J.M.'s love for church music was certainly non-ending. He believed that church music was a direct communication to the Lord. He also believed that such music should always be presented with excellence and no other way was acceptable. He believed that each choir member should sing not only with their voice but with their heart."

"He believed that each choir member should sing not only with their voice but with their heart."

— Gail Wood

Endnotes—

I had the privilege of knowing two of these ministers of music very well. Although I did not have the opportunity to know W.C. Morgan, I did know his lovely wife during my growing up years. All of these men anchored their lives in a relationship with the Lord, they answered His call to Christian ministry, and they availed them-

selves to His service with an old-fashioned approach of servant leadership, investing themselves in the lives of others. The memorial endowments that bear their names are testimonies of this investment that yields eternal dividends.

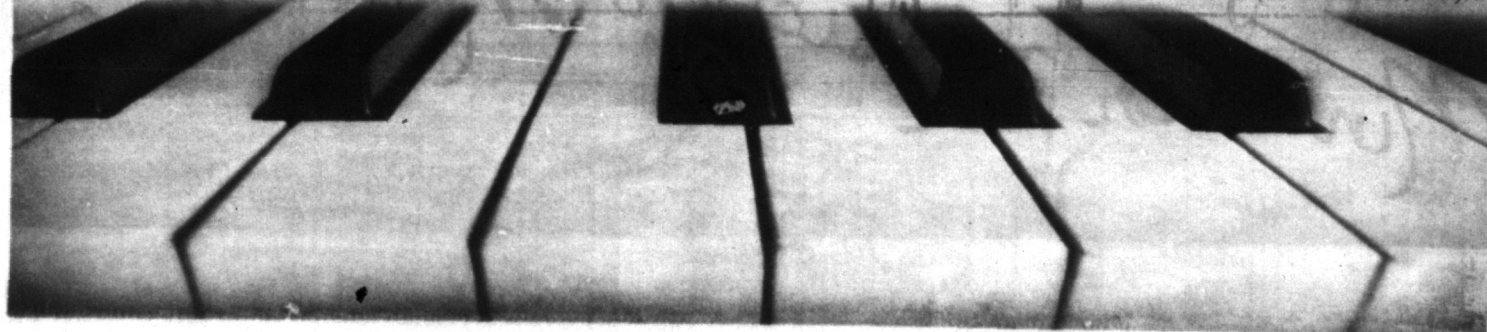
Many of the funds administered by the Mississippi Baptist Foundation are established as memorial endowments. Please contact the Foundation at (601) 292-

3210 or foundation@mbcb.org for more information about establishing a memorial fund to honor the life and legacy of loved ones who invested in others as faithful and obedient servants of our Lord.

Daniel C. Hall

— Daniel C. Hall

With grateful appreciation, the author acknowledges incorporated information and insight for this article from We Shall Come Rejoicing: A History of Baptist Church Music in Mississippi (1985, Gwen Keys Hitt) and Sharing the Song of Jesus: A Celebration of 60 Years of The Church Music Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention (2005, L. Lavon Gray, PhD) and Broadmoor Baptist Church: The First 50 Years...A Past to Honor, A Future to Claim (2006, Kirk Ford, PhD).





CP transformed my church

I was born and raised in Aberdeen, MS. My home church was FBC, Aberdeen. One Sunday morning, my Father and I were sitting in the balcony, and I saw a crying adult man come forward during the invitation to accept Jesus as Savior. I remember telling my Father that I wanted to be happy like that man. Later that day in my living room, I knelt with the Pastor and gave my 7 year old heart to Christ. The Pastor also talked to my older brother and Father, and we were all privileged to be baptized the same evening! During my teenage years, I responded to the call to ministry and began preaching. I am forever grateful to the churches in Monroe County that allowed a young man the opportunity to preach. I continued my education at Mississippi College, New Orleans Seminary, and later in life completed post graduate work at Trinity Seminary. I have been privileged to Pastor in Mississippi since 1974. For the last 20+ years, I have served as Pastor of the McLaurin Heights Baptist Church in Pearl, MS.

I have always been a fan of the Cooperative Program. I grew up hearing reports of missionaries and seeing my home church in Aberdeen committed to mission offerings at Christmas and Easter. As a seminary student, I received a marvelous education at a fraction of the cost due to CP support of its seminaries. As a Pastor, I have seen firsthand the scope and majesty of Cooperative Program ministries both at home and abroad. The Cooperative Program gives back much more than we give to its ministries.

During the past 18 months, I discovered an additional way that the Cooperative Program ministered to my church and me. Dr. Steve Stone, of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, contacted several Pastors during the first part of 2012, asking us to consider being part of the Transformational Church project. I met with Dr. Stone; then he also came and made presentations of the program's potential blessings to our church. During that summer, we decided to participate. We had the Bible study during August, and the church took on-line assessment in September.

THE EXPERIENCE WAS WONDERFUL. I had searched for a tool that would allow the church to accurately assess where we were and where we needed to go. I had wished for a tool that would be congregation generated, not staff generated; a tool that would allow the congregation to take ownership of the assessment process. Following the assessment, we had an interpretation day retreat to look over the results, and to uncover and prioritize the church's points of celebration and points of challenge. This was followed by a church share time and the formation of an action team.

The purpose of the action team was to find appropriate ways to recognize the celebrations and address the challenges. Most of the past 12 months have been spent on points of celebration and formulating specific programs and emphases which address the challenges. One example of a challenge was our ministry to the local community. The assessment indicated that a large portion of our church family felt we needed to do more in this area. As a result, we took the quarter mile radius surrounding our church, prayer walked each street, delivered flyers to every home, surveyed each home, and had a neighborhood block party at the church for that area of Pearl.

GOING THROUGH THE TRANSFORMATIONAL CHURCH PROCESS ABSOLUTELY RE-ENERGIZED OUR CHURCH AND STAFF, AND RE-FOCUSED OUR MINISTRY FOR OUR LORD AS A CHURCH.

None of this would have been possible without the Cooperative Program. We often think of the Cooperative Program in terms of missions, which it is. However, the Cooperative Program is also relationships and expertise of Mississippi Baptist Convention Board personnel and the provision of materials. I am grateful for the continuing help that the Cooperative Program gives to me and to my church through varied ministries. We have been transformed!

To view this Cooperative Program Testimony online, please visit <http://www.mbc.org/cp/videos.aspx>

BAGS

cont. from p. 1

It was from one of the Rankin Baptist churches, and the idea just stuck with me. I went to a meeting at Bethel where the Bethel kids were putting together the bags and thought there could be an even bigger vision

for it. So I talked to Brother Allen [Stephens] about it, and he said 'go for it.'

There were 300 bags delivered October 1.

"There are about 300 new and relapse cancer patients here," said Stephens.

"It's a good thing to be able to deliver the bags when there's progression," Ball said. "It's at that point when a lot of them are really seeking. It's a great ministry."

Each month, a different church is responsible for the bags. Park Place, Brandon, was responsible for the bags this particular Tuesday. "We started this ministry in July," Thompson said, "and we're committed through July, 2014. I actually haven't had to make any phone calls to any churches. We've just let the need be known about this program, and the churches call and we give them a date."

Each bag contains water, snacks, spiritual literature from the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, and a Bible. Different churches provide different items. Depending on the church, a bag might contain tissues, pen and paper, and hand sanitizer.

"A lot of times, a patient may be facing a CT scan, and they're not allowed to eat or drink anything" Ball said. "So you've been all day without food or water,

you find out that you have progression, and then you see me. You can have a snack and some water before you get out of the doctor's office."

"One item I really wanted in the bag was a Bible," Thompson said. "If you're sitting there, you have so many issues you're facing in your life, you have something to help."

Baptist Hospital has really taken the spiritual aspect of their work to a new level," Stephens said. "Just look at the signage around the hospital now."

"We used to have what were called town meetings," Ball said. "Now they're called forums, and administration asks employees 'what is most important to you?' It kept coming back to faith, and what you see reflects that."

Churches interested in this ministry can contact the Rankin Association office for more information. "It doesn't even need to be a church in our association," Stephens said. "We don't want this to be just Rankin."

"I'd love to see the same project done at St. Dominic's," said Thompson. "It's really such an easy thing to do. We provide the bags, the Bibles, and the literature. The church supplies the other items, decorates the bags, and delivers them. What's really cool is to see how the churches pull their members together for the project. Just think - when you realize every one of those bags represents a person, it pulls it all together for you."

"Since July, we've provided 1200 bags," Stephens noted.

"People need to know that each one of the bags we do is attached to a person with a need," Ball said.

"The first person to respond with a thank-you note was a Methodist pastor," Stephens said. "So this is very much a kingdom deal."

Funds from the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering are used to help provide bags and other materials for Rankin Association.

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IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH, NATCHEZ, MS IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A FULL TIME PASTOR. Please mail resumes to: Immanuel Baptist Church, 684 Hwy 61 North Natchez, Ms. 39120. Attn: Pastor Search Committee

STUDENT MINISTER OF YOUTH/CHILDREN - New Hope Baptist Church in the Clarkdale Community of Lauderdale County. MS is seeking God's Man for the full time position of Student Minister of Youth/Children. Email Resume to newhope145@gmail.com or mail to NHBC Student Minister Committee, 6573 Hwy. 145, Mendon, MS 39031. Deadline for submitting is December 14, 2013.

IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH IN VICKSBURG, MS 39180, IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR/YOUTH DIRECTOR. Please send resume to 6949 Highway 61 S. or e-mail the church at [bellsouth.net](mailto:secretary@bellsouth.net)

MINISTER OF STUDENTS / ASSOCIATE PASTOR- BROOKSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH. Job Description available on website www.brooksideob.com. Send cover letter and Resume to: Brookside Baptist Church, Personnel Team 4993 Hwy 302 E. Olive Branch, MS 38654

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN KOSCIUSKO, MS IS SEEKING 2 FULL TIME POSITIONS: A FULL TIME CHILDREN'S MINISTER AND A FULL TIME YOUTH MINISTER. Please send resume to First Baptist Church, attn: Personnel Committee, P.O. Box 70, Kosciusko, MS 39090

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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST
PASTORS
HAVE BEEN A
CRITICAL
BAPTIST CHILDREN'S
VILLAGE
PARTNER SINCE
1897

THANK YOU

"Our ministry is grateful for the investments you and others have made in our children and staff since we began 116 years ago.

It was a Mississippi Baptist Pastor from Senatobia who was our very first advocate. Rev. L. S. Foster presented the idea to fellow Baptist pastors and friends, and worked diligently to see the vision of this ministry become a reality. Today we continue, with the help of many more Mississippi Baptist pastors like yourself, to provide for the needs of children in an environment where they can experience God's love.

This month we celebrate you, and the sacrifices you have lead your church to make to ensure that this legacy continues. Thank you for your leadership and your faithfulness.

AUGUST 2013

MEMORIALS

Joan Rizzo
Ms. Martha H. Woods
Jerry Roberts
Mr. Albert E. Garner
Mrs. Cade Rogers
Mrs. Joy B. Roberts
Mr. Luther Rone
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins
Sarah Michelle "Missy" Rosales
Ms. Mary Lou Lott
Mrs. Barbara Ann Denton
J. M. "Russ" Russell
Mrs. Billie Lynn Arthur
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Buchanan
Mr. Claude Ryals
Mrs. Jacqueline H. Green
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry E. Breakfield
Kathye Ryan
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel A. Smith
Mr. Henry Sallis
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Mr. & Mrs. Everett Stafford
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Dorothy Swindle
Wayne Swindle & Family
Elsie Bishop
John Swindle & Family
Faye Ellis & Family
Ruth Slay
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Mrs. Betty A. Aden
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Mrs. Mary Jo Dacus and Family
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Mac Taylor
Mr. & Mrs. Garry Randall
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Wondering About Judgment? • John 8:12, 15-18, 23-27, 42-47

I have some disturbing news for each of us. We are guilty. There is no reason to plead otherwise. There are witnesses that can verify our guilt in the matter. We know in our hearts and minds of our own faults. There is no need for an attorney, or even a plea bargain. Nothing we can say or do can change the facts of the case against us. The crime, you ask? We are guilty of sin. Don't breathe easy just yet. Don't belittle this charge just because everyone else is guilty too. Furthermore, it is a waste of time to attempt to justify our actions, give excuses, or present alibis. It is truly an open and shut case. The punishment for our crimes? The death penalty. However...there is some good news!

We realize we know the Judge! It's Him! It is Jesus, the Son of God. The One handling the case is our Savior and Redeemer; the one who died in our place. We cannot explain how we know it is Him, but it is. Maybe it is His compassionate eyes; maybe it was the soft sound sandaled feet. Now that you mention His feet, we see the scars. Those strangely beautiful scars that are reminders of the cross. But wait, a sense of terrible fear and anguish engulf each of us. Without question, Judge Jesus knows every thought that has crossed our mind, ev-

ery word spoken, each sinful act committed and every single time we have acted out of pride or selfishly. Shame creeps closer to us but suddenly and gloriously subsides.

While our mind is flooded with all of these thoughts and emotions, an overwhelming truth is realized. Not only do we know the Judge, He knows us personally and intimately.

If it were any other judge we would have a valid reason to be terrified and hopeless. We remember the cross of Calvary. Are we truly guilty? Yes and no. Yes, because we are all sinners and have fallen short of the glory of God. There is not a righteous bone in our body. On our best day, we were still unrighteous and stained with sin. We even felt guilty. Do you know why? Because we were guilty. On the other hand, if you are a Christian our crimes have been forgiven. What an amazing picture of incredible grace. The same Judge that



Explore the Bible
with Bobby McKay

knows of our guilt pays the debt for our sins personally, cleans our records of transgressions, and finally revokes the death penalty and in exchange, grants us the ability to never die. (This would be a good time to stop and thank Him, by the way).

So, I must pose a question for each of us. Is that the kind of judge we all need?

Of course. Is that the kind of judge we deserve? Absolutely not. The lesson reminds us this week of the identity of the

True Judge. We are completely unqualified to judge the hearts and motives of others. The Pharisees of Jesus' day and the self-righteous of today have not changed much. They tend to forget of their own sins and shortcomings. There is no status I can achieve, nor title I can possess that qualifies me to be the judge of someone's soul.

We can be so consumed with the sins of others that we lose sight of our own need

for forgiveness and mercy. When we desire justice for everyone but ourselves, we look nothing like the Savior that we profess to believe in. Jesus says verse 24, "Unless you believe, you will die in your sins." It doesn't have to be that way for you and those you love. You can bow before the Great Judge and He will save you and cleanse you. You can die for your sins or you can trust the substitutionary death of Jesus for your sins.

If you die for your sins, the judgment will be damning and the consequence, fatal. If you trust the death, burial and resurrection of Christ the outcome will be remarkably different. Some preachers like to employ the line of, "When you stand before Jesus and He asks you, 'Why should I let you into my heaven?' what will you say?" I personally find that type of thinking both manipulative and unbiblical. When I face Jesus in judgment, you want to know what I will say? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. I will be so overwhelmed with the glory of Christ I will not be able to speak. But then again, I won't have to. The judge will know me and His blood will have covered my iniquities.

McKay is pastor of Harperville Church, Harperville.

Stand Your Ground • Galatians 2:1-14

Galatians lays out to us believers that we are no longer under the law but are saved by faith alone. (Gal. 5:1 "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then and do not let yourself be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.")

If the issue is a matter of biblical options, there is no room for negotiations. Our news media nearly everyday screams at us to stop praying "in the name of Jesus". I pray in the name of Jesus that God will forgive them their obscene and obese ignorance. In Galatians 2 Paul is vigorously defending his apostleship, knowing that the gospel stands or falls with his defense. The church in Jerusalem some 15-16 years earlier were offering no disagreement with Paul's message. Proof of that is the fact that Paul took Titus with him to Galatia as Exhibit A- a pagan Greek gentile who was uncircumcised but saved by faith alone.

From the very first preaching of Christianity, there arose a difference of apprehension between those Christians who were first Jews and those who were first Gentiles. The ceremonial law of Moses had a stronghold on Peter, the apostles to the Jews, and Paul, the Hebrew of the Hebrews, assigned to the gentiles had to cling tenaciously to his principles with resolve when others caved and failed in

their theological teachings. He stood his ground with theologically correct Christianity and openly and with a friendly manner laid it all open before them in its purest form. Peter, on the other hand, could be persuaded to side with the Judaizers.

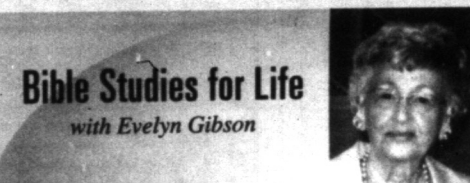
It has been said that Judaism was the cradle of our Christianity and very nearly

became its grave. (Say "thank you Paul," for the fabulous rescue.) Still, in our American culture, there are many who want to DO something to be saved, but the clarification is in Acts 16:31 (NIV Study Bible) in answer to what must I do to be saved? "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved - you and your household." Herein lies our Declaration of Independence.

We need all pastors to preach the correct theology. Though Paul faced strong misunderstanding that freedom from law was freedom to sin at will, he proceeded to espouse that our new life is not ours

at all but rather was the life of Christ in us. You just can't rely on circumcision for your salvation for we are told that circumcision or not has no value. The only thing you can rely on is faith.

There were always be false teachers bombarding what the church is teaching, but biblical ground cannot be yielded. From



Bible Studies for Life
with Evelyn Gibson

This was merely a plea, a request for help, and its position always remains outside the preaching of the gospel. This endeavor is to be a natural consequence among believers, to be participated in purely out of gratitude for the good news which saved them.

Paul, however, had to oppose another gospel that was being preached because he knew it was wrong. The Judaizers were still wanting to require circumcision in order to become a bona fide Christian.

Paul openly and boldly, without running others down behind their backs, addressed the issue and appealed the gospel message of free grace (not through works of the law).

There were those in Galatia who out of fear were willing to compromise. We don't have the liberty to just sit and rock, but it calls for forthrightness based on the gospel message. By grace, through faith alone, God declares us sinners to be righteous, and hopefully, from that point on, we begin a life long period of maturation. Its a day by day, bit by bit, adventure. Its our Christian journey to be gladdened and incorporated with God's love, and savored and magnified and shared. Nothing else like it.

Eventually, Paul states with neon lights flashing that "I will not set aside God's grace. If justification comes by law, then Christ died for nothing." If we are justified by keeping the ancient laws, then didn't Christ die in vain? Think about Martin Luther who became convicted and he did something bold as had Paul. He nailed his statements at the Diet of Worms and said "Here I stand". Convicted, convincing and unmovable. Learn from Paul in Galatians how to stand your ground.

Gibson is a member of Monticello Church, Monticello.

Revivals & Homecomings

► **Gunter Road Church, Florence:** Homecoming, Nov. 3; services, 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch; Gene Jordan, speaker.
► **Immanuel Church, Greenwood:** Revival, Nov. 3 - 6; Sun., 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 6:30 p.m.; Clint Harris, speaker.

► **Leesburg Church, Morton:** Homecoming, Nov. 3, 10 a.m.
► **Kolola Springs, Caledonia:** Homecoming, Nov. 3; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by potluck meal; Dan Robertson, speaker; Chris Harding, music.

► **Eastwood Church, Indianapolis:** Revival, Nov. 3 - 8; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Fri., 7 p.m.; Wayne Hudson, speaker; Steve & Becky Carver, music; Jeffrey Jeffers, pastor.
► **First Church, Wiggins:** Homecoming, Nov. 3; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship,

11 a.m., followed by fellowship meal and entertainment; Burn Page, speaker; Bill Clark, entertainment.
► **Crestview Church, Petal:** Revival, Nov. 3 - 6; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Dean Register, speaker; Answered Prayer, music.
► **Utica Church, Utica:** Revival,

Nov. 3 - 6; Sun., 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. nightly; Gary Bowlin, speaker; Bruce and Lisa Wethey, music.
► **Bellevue Church, Hattiesburg:** Homecoming, Nov. 3; service, 10 a.m., followed by covered dish meal; Grady Parker, pastor; Nick Davis, music.

Just for the Record

In other Church News:

- **Vaiden Church, Vaiden**, is hosting its annual Hunter's Harvest Nov. 2. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Harvest Outdoor Ministries and two-time World Predator Calling Champion Jon Paul Moody will present the program. Free, including meal and door prizes.
- **Sunrise Church, Leake Co.**, will hold their annual fall festival Oct. 31, 4:30 - 7:30 p.m., including games, inflatables, candy, and stew for supper. Free.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG for-

mat. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Need a light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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